

## Overprinted Stationery of the Imperial British East Africa Company, 1895 by George T. Krieger

On July 9, 1895 the stationery of the Imperial British East Africa Company overprinted "BRITISH EAST AFRICA" (in three lines) was released in Mombasa. The Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), that had administered the area under a Royal Charter, was in financial difficulty and turned administration over to the Crown officially on July 1, 1895. The Postmaster General, Thomas E.C. Remington, decided to protect revenue by overprinting the stamps and stationery; only inventory existing in the Protectorate was overprinted.

Quantity overprinted:

½ anna postcard	1200
1 anna postcard	1500
2½ annas envelope	1400
F size 2 annas registered letter envelope	125
J size 2 annas registered letter envelope	200

The overprint was done by attaching printers type to a handle and was applied manually. Therefore positioning of the overprint varies.

### Postal Cards

There was only one version of each the Half Anna and One Anna cards issued by the IBEAC, thus there is only one version of each overprinted. These are the most readily available overprinted items.



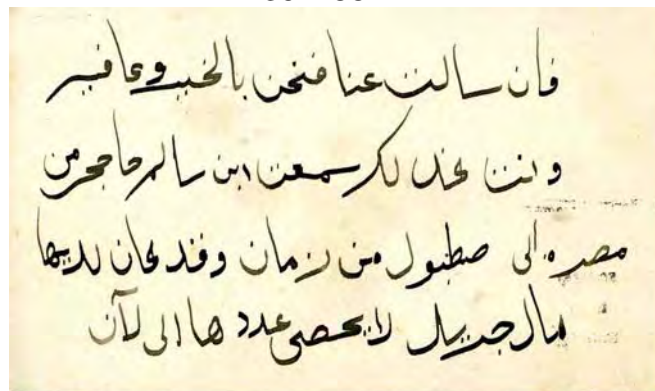
Half Anna card for internal use  
121 x 74 mm



One Anna card for foreign use  
139 x 88 mm



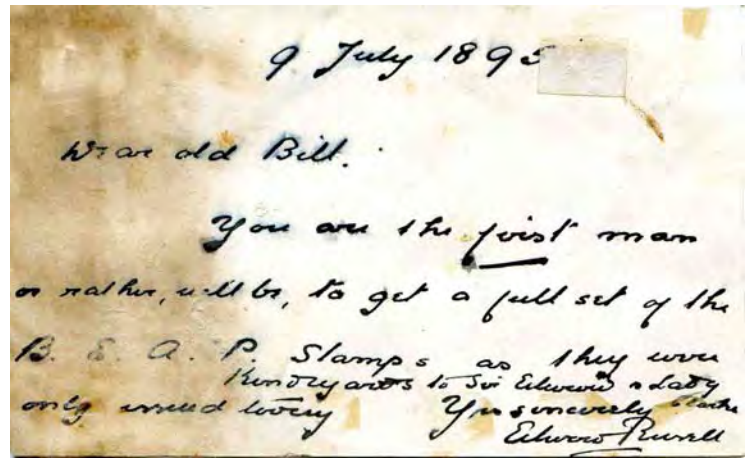
Mombasa cancel dated JY 21 95



Message side



Mombasa cancel dated JY 9 95



Message side

The illustrated One Anna card provides contemporary evidence of the issue date. Addressed to Wm. Clarke, Esq., Thorncote, Staines, the message reads:

9 July 1895

Dear Old Bill,

You are the first man or rather, will be, to get a full set of the B.E.A.P. Stamps as they were only issued today.  
Kind regards to Sir Edward and Lady Clarke.

Yours sincerely  
Edward Russell

According to Steve North's book *Europeans in British Administered East Africa, 1889-1903*, Edward John Henderson Russell was British and born c. 1872. He joined the IBEAC on 12 October 1894. Appointed Assistant District Officer Kikuyu on 2 May 1895. Departed Fort Smith 20 June 1895 and arrived in Mombasa the day the post card was sent, 9 July 1895. He remained in Mombasa until 23 July when he departed for Kikuyu. Russell served in a number of positions throughout BEA and Uganda until succumbing to malaria on 31 May 1900.

## Envelopes

There were five versions of the 2½ annas stamped envelopes issued by the IBEAC. Only the final version, 137 x 78 mm, is known with the overprint.





Mombasa cancel dated SP 1 95  
 ½ anna stamp added to pay the correct rate to Russia



Lamu cancel dated JU 23 96

### Registered Letter Envelopes (RLE)

The overprinted RLEs are the scarcest British East Africa postal stationery, excepting errors. The IBEAC issued RLEs in two sizes; F (varying from 132 x 82 mm to 135 x 83 mm) and J (254 x 106 mm). There were 5 versions of the F size and 2 versions of the J size. Only 1 version of the J size is known with the overprint while two of the F size are known with the overprint.

#### F Size

The five versions of the F size IBEAC RLEs have a number of minor differences. The two versions overprinted are differentiated by the size and punctuation of the central inscription.



Type 1

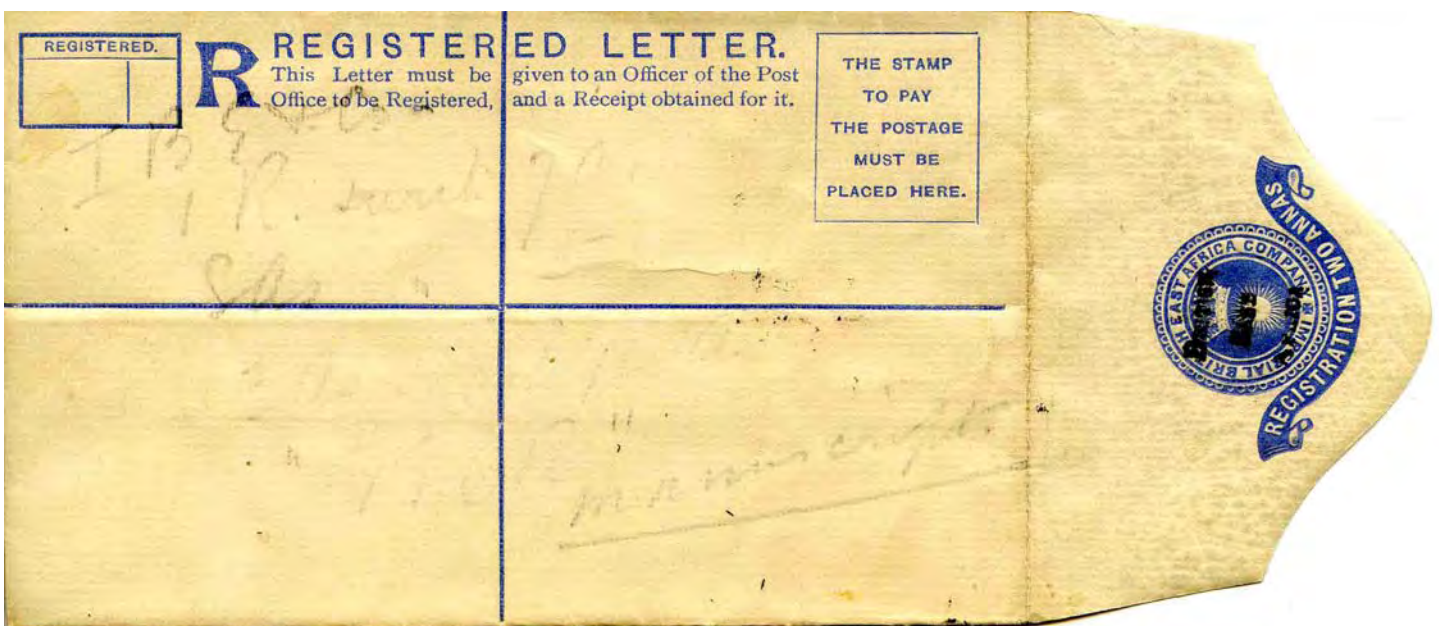
Stops at end of first and third lines  
 'REGISTERED LETTER' 66 mm long  
 Light blue



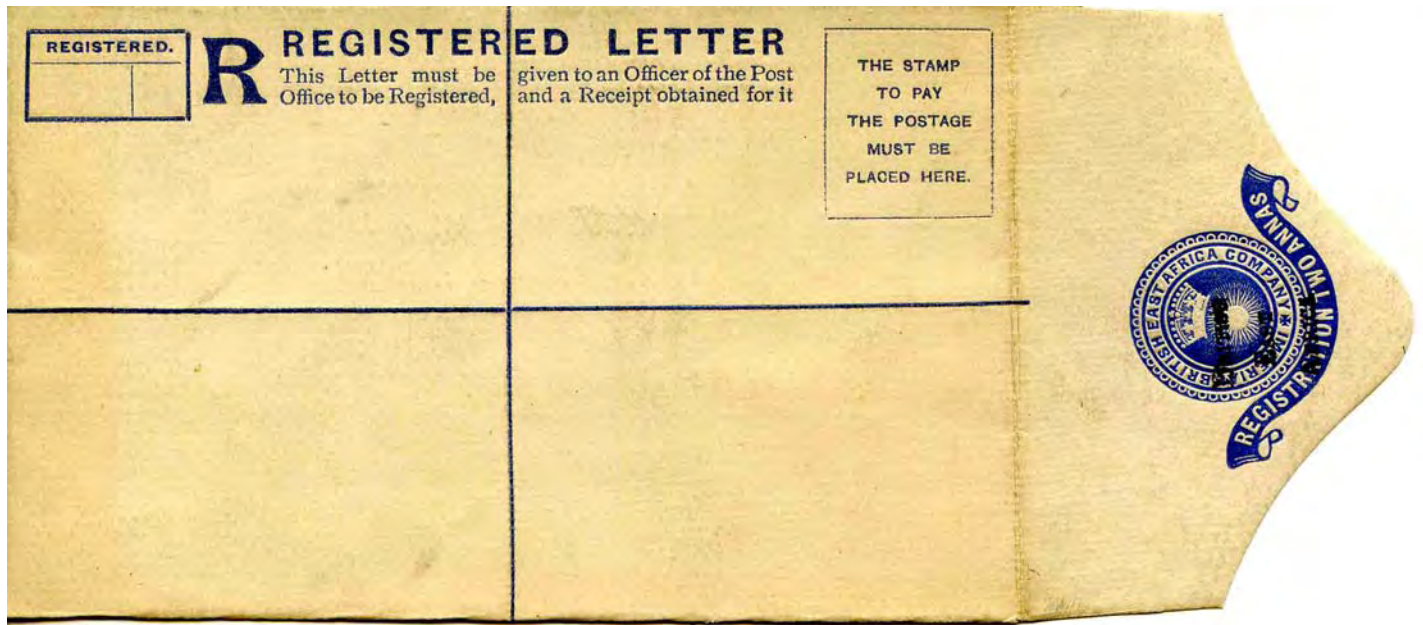
Type 2

No stops  
 'REGISTERED LETTER' 60 mm long  
 Dark blue

Only one example of the Type 2 size F RLE has been recorded with the overprint; all others are the Type 1 RLE. Six commercial usages of the Type 1 overprinted RLE have been recorded.



Type 1



Type 2



Mombasa Cancel dated SE 3 95



Lamu cancel dated OC 28 95



Routed through Aden

**Earliest use of the overprinted stamps of India**

**J Size**

The two types of IBEAC J size RLEs may be differentiated per the illustrations. Only the Type 2 is known with the overprint. Only two commercial uses have been recorded.



Type 1  
'R' over 'E' in LETTER



Type 2  
'R' left of 'E' in LETTER

REGISTERED.

# REGISTERED LETTER.

THE STAMP  
TO PAY  
THE POSTAGE  
MUST BE  
PLACED HERE.

**R** THIS LETTER MUST BE GIVEN TO AN OFFICER OF THE POST OFFICE TO BE REGISTERED, AND A RECEIPT OBTAINED FOR IT

REGISTERED.  
*6533*

# REGISTERED LETTER.

**R** THIS LETTER MUST BE GIVEN TO AN OFFICER OF THE POST OFFICE TO BE REGISTERED, AND A RECEIPT OBTAINED FOR IT

*1166*  
*26*  
*445*  
Mr. John Paalzw

1000 West Main Street  
Richmond  
Virginia

34589

U.S.A.

TAVETA  
JAN 18 97

REGISTERED  
LONDON  
21 FEB 1897



ALBERT B. THOMAS  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, U.S.A.  
MAYNO, ILLINOIS  
12 JAN 1897



49  
FEB  
REC  
ADEN

REGISTERED  
MAR 5  
1897  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

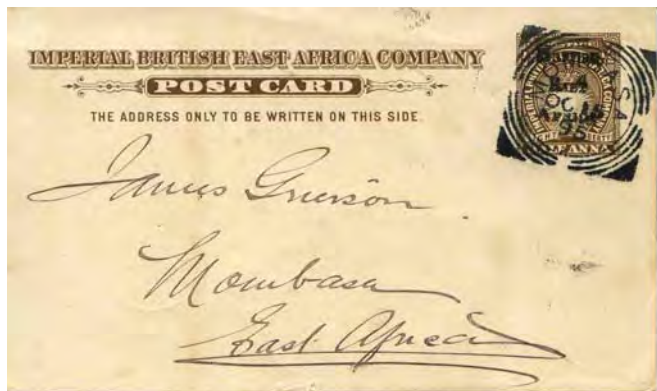
REGISTERED  
MAR 8  
1897  
NEW YORK

The used example illustrated is addressed to the U.S.A. and mailed from Taveta. (Taveta, near the border with German East Africa, has the distinction of being the only British Empire town to be occupied by German forces during WWI.)

This RLE is also the earliest known use of the Taveta cancellation, January 16, 1897. The mixed franking of 10 annas paid the 4X rate. Routed through Mombasa, Aden, London and Washington. DC it arrived in Richmond march 6, 1897.

### Philatelic Usages

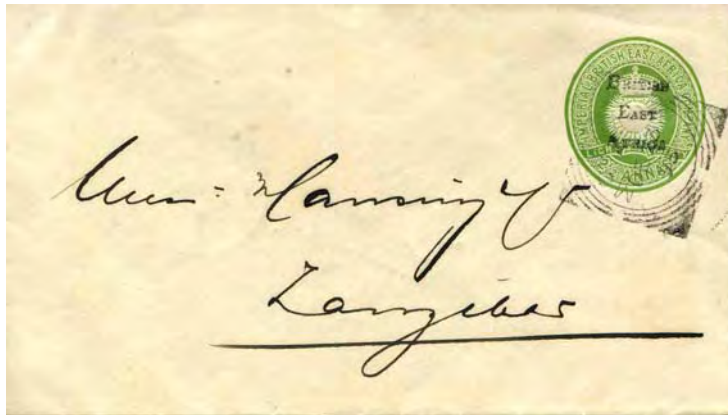
As with most stamp and stationery issues of British East Africa there are a number of philatelic usages of the overprinted stationery. Salzmann, Hansing & Co. and Grieson were amongst the creators.



Mombasa OC 1 95



Mombasa DE 23 95



Mombasa DE 23 95



Mombasa NO 8 95



Earliest recorded use of the overprinted 1/2 anna and 1 anna stamps of India

## Concordance Table

	Denomination	Size	Type	H&G #	Minns #	Quantity printed
Postal Cards	Half anna	121 x 74 mm		3	PC3	1200
	One anna	139 x 88 mm		4	PC4	1500
Envelopes	2½ annas	137 x 78 mm		B2	E2	1400
Registered Letter	2 annas	F	1	C2	RE3	125
	2 annas	F	2		RE3a	
Envelopes	2annas	J	2	C3	RE4	200

Reference:

*British East Africa; The Stamps, Postal Stationery and Cancellations*, by John Minns; edited and published by George T. Krieger, 2006.